

17 May 1968

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Briefing of Key Congressional Personnel on Cancellation
of OXCART Program

1. This morning the Director instructed us to brief key congressional personnel, especially including Chairmen Russell and Rivers and Senator Stennis, on the cancellation of OXCART. He also wanted us to brief key staff members, and left to our discretion whether to brief other committee members ourselves or rely on committee staff personnel to relay the briefing to them.

2. William Woodruff, of the Senate Appropriations Committee staff, was briefed and later had an opportunity to pass the information to Senator Russell, explaining that the Director would probably be contacting the Senator to provide further details at the Senator's convenience. Chairman Rivers was out of town until the first of next week. [] and I briefed Senator Young. Later, [] briefed Senators Stennis, Jackson, Symington and Smith, Representative Bates and staff member Darden.

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3. According to Mr. Woodruff, Senator Russell raised questions concerning; (a) the authority under which Secretary Clifford undertook to cancel the OXCART program; (b) how, when and by whom the decision was made; (c) annual cost of the OXCART program; and (d) the comparative effectiveness and productivity as between OXCART and the SR-71; OXCART; and satellite reconnaissance.

4. Senator Young expressed misgivings about the cancellation of the program and said he would like further details at an early opportunity. He also said Senator Symington would be especially interested, since Symington was already deeply concerned over the failure of the U. S. Air Force to produce an advanced high-performance military aircraft. In addition, he asked if we could give him a briefing on the new Soviet fighter aircraft, "the

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successor to the MIG-23" (he presumably referred to the SU-9). He expressed surprise that a recent Air Force witness at an Appropriations Committee hearing had no information on this plane. We told the Senator that we would be happy to arrange a briefing for him, at his convenience, probably next week.

5. On being briefed by [REDACTED] Senator Jackson also expressed 25X1A concern and indicated he might press for an early meeting of the full CIA Subcommittee of Senate Armed Services Committee.

6. Upon being told of Senator Russell's interest, the Director asked that we try to arrange an early meeting with the Senator, preferably for Monday, 20 May. He also asked that we pass to Mr. Duckett the questions which Mr. Woodruff said concerned the Senator so that Mr. Duckett could prepare responses for the Director's use, to be available at the opening of business Monday morning.

25X1A 7. Senators Stennis and Symington were literally briefed on the run by [REDACTED] and had no real opportunity to focus on the subject, but both asked that we convey to the Director their best wishes and appreciation for seeing that they were informed. Senator Stennis asked if we had contacted Senator Russell and was informed that we had contacted him through Mr. Woodruff and were attempting to arrange for a meeting between the Director and Senator Russell on Monday. Senator Stennis said he definitely planned to "look into it."

8. Senator Jackson was very interested in the subject. He expressed his continuing concern (as did the other Senators in various degrees) over the lack of a Senate CIA Subcommittee session. He said this gave our critics real ammunition to use against us and added that he planned to take this up again with Chairman Russell. (In each instance when our members expressed a desire for a Subcommittee meeting, our response indicated that we were also anxious to get together with the Subcommittee as soon and as often as possible.)

9. Senator Smith said she was distressed when informed of the original decision to mothball OXCART and still did not favor it, but added that she knew people in authority were in the unhappy position of having to make decisions of

25X1A this sort. She asked if there was any new information on the Pueblo. [] indicated that other than the movement of the ship to Najin and the dismantling of it, he knew of nothing new. The Senator was interested in why the North Koreans were dismantling the ship and asked for our views on the significance of this move. [] told the Senator he would certainly look into it.

10. We are to contact Senator Russell's office Monday morning to determine the Senator's availability to see the Director.

11. Mr. Bates was very interested in details (both technical and otherwise) on comparison of the OXCART, SR-71, and satellite programs. It was agreed that this information could best be provided by Mr. Duckett or an individual he might designate. We are to arrange for a meeting along these lines early next week.

12. Mr. Philip Kelleher was briefed by [] in his office and reviewed in some detail the sequence of events since the December 1966 Presidential determination. In the light of his knowledge of the program and of the SR-71 military program, Mr. Kelleher expressed a personal concern at its being terminated for economy reasons. Mr. Kelleher advised that the Chairman was away and that Mr. Blandford was back that morning from his European trip and that he would pass the information to Mr. Blandford.

13. During the afternoon Mr. Blandford was briefed by [] and he advised that he had already talked to Mr. Kelleher. He advised that he did not expect to be in contact with the Chairman over the weekend and requested that I remind him on Monday and refresh his memory on details at that time so that he could take it up with the Chairman. Mr. Blandford, when briefed by [] mentioned that this matter had been discussed with Secretary Clifford and that "they" had noted that a matter of [] economy did not appear compelling. Mr. Blandford did not feel, however, that the discussion had any real effect.

14. During a meeting with Colonel White, Messrs. Duckett, Bross, Clarke, and myself this afternoon, the Director made the following points: (a) from this morning's hearing and other developments, it is clear that

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the intelligence community will feel the full impact of current economy pressures from the Congress; (b) in these circumstances the Congress intends to look to the Director for economy measures affecting not only the Agency but the entire community; (c) an early meeting of the CIA Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee is urgently needed and we should try to stimulate Committee members to press Senator Russell for such a meeting, explaining that we are anxious to report fully on the cancellation of OXCART, and that this can be done more effectively in the form of a Committee briefing than piecemeal among various members separately.

Legislative Counsel

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